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State Morning Summary

BUREAU OF INTELLIGENCE AND RESEARCH - ANALYSIS: August 2, 1980

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25X11. IRAN: STRUGGLE OVER SELECTING PRIME MINISTER INTENSIFIES

The process of choosing a Prime Minister is exacerbating the rivalry between Bani-Sadr and the militant clerics. A final selection will be especially difficult as long as Khomeini remains above the fray. In the end, the man chosen will almost certainly be someone acceptable to the clerics, while Bani-Sadr will be shorn of the little power that he now has, or will be out.

Bani-Sadr's request that the parliament postpone action on his nomination of Mostafa Mir-Salim as Prime Minister reflects his need to defer to the Islamic Republican Party's (IRP) preference for someone with a thoroughly "Islamic" approach to the Revolution. If the IRP succeeds in forcing another nomination, it will, in effect, have taken from the President the right to nominate the Prime Minister, which is the principal power of the presidency.

In the current complex maneuvering, IRP leader Beheshti has said that he prefers Jalaladin Farsi, a strongly Islamic IRP member, or Education Minister Rajai. Coincidentally, Ayatollah Khalkhali, the "hanging judge," has declared himself a candidate, a development that Beheshti admits "is possible." Beheshti has also said, mysteriously, that a "special constitutional solution -- possibly the resignation of Bani-Sadr as President -- could resolve the impasse.

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Khomeini has turned down a suggestion that he nominate one member of the investigating committee, saying that this was a matter between parliament and the President. This is typical of Khomeini's method of avoiding a firm decision on controversial matters. Instead,

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Even before this latest confrontation, there were indications that Bani-Sadr's time in power might be short. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] one of his closest associates said that the President expected to fall or have his power reduced to a meaningless level within weeks. [REDACTED]

Bani-Sadr is obviously concerned about the effect on him. In a July 29 speech, he spoke of the dangerous consequences of weakening the presidency -- precisely what is happening.

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